

# WORKERS WORLD

Workers and oppressed peoples of the world unite!

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AUG. 7, 2008

VOL. 50, NO. 31

50¢

## After ICE arrests in Iowa

# Thousands march to free immigrant workers

By Martha Grevatt  
Postville, Iowa

Some 3,000 demonstrators, outnumbering the population of this small town, came here July 27 to express their outrage over a brutal raid May 12 by Immigration and Customs Enforcement on a local meatpacking plant in which 389 immigrant workers were arrested. Agriprocessors, the largest kosher meat processor in the country, was raided on the grounds that workers were engaged in "identity theft." Many of these workers were sentenced to five-months' imprisonment and now face deportation.

The demonstration was called jointly by St. Bridget's Catholic Church in Postville, Jewish Community Action of Minneapolis and Jewish Council on Urban Affairs of Chicago. St. Bridget's has been a pillar of support—materially and emotionally—to the families of the detainees. JCUA has established a relief fund.

Thousands filled the St. Bridget's hall and the grounds outside, coming mainly from the Midwest but also New York and Massachusetts. Several buses were chartered from Chicago and Minneapolis/St. Paul by the JCA, the JCUA and others.

Those who came with their religious organizations were joined by Latin@, Black and white youth as well as trade unionists. The out-of-town supporters joined with

## HARDSHIP & STRUGGLE

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many hundreds of Postville residents, both immigrant and U.S.-born. The most courageous marchers—the families directly impacted by the raids—were asked to lead the march.

Children carried signs reading "ICE, don't separate more families" and "ICE, Regresame a mi papa, Te pido justicia" ("ICE, give me back to my papa, I ask you for justice").

The two-mile march was loud. Favorite chants included "Si se puede" ("Yes, we can") and "El pueblo unido jamas sera vencido" ("The people united will never be defeated"). The crowd joined in when Black and Latin@ youth from Minnesota chanted "Black, brown and white, together we fight."

At the same time as this demonstration  
*Continued on page 7*

## WW STATEMENT

## HANDS OFF IRAN!

Another moment of truth approaches. While Washington finally joined talks with Tehran, Congress is still considering a resolution calling for an air, sea and land blockade of Iran, opening one path to war.

What is the relationship between U.S. imperialism and the Islamic Republic of Iran? Will the talks lead to an agreement or will the U.S. warships in the Gulf—or the Israeli military—unleash a massive air attack against the Iranian people? What is the stake for workers

*Continued on page 10*



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WW PHOTOS: MARTHA GREVATT  
Marchers demand freedom for detained immigrant workers, July 27, Postville, Iowa.



# A real brat—Michael Savage

## Radio host attacks autistic children

By Sara Catalinotto

July 28—During his three-hour radio show on July 16, host Michael Savage claimed that “Autism is a fraud, a racket” and that most children with autistic traits are “brats who haven’t been told to cut out the act.” He specifically blamed mothers, saying that the children “don’t have a father around to tell them” things like, “Don’t sit there screaming and crying, you idiot.” The implication was that special services should not be granted to children designated as autistic.

Organizations across the U.S. that link autism families, advocates and educators sprang into action. Radio station WOR-NY was picketed on July 21; an online petition, Fire Michael Savage, is near its goal of 10,000 names. Autism United rallied on July 25 on Wall Street and on July 27 at Savage’s base station in San Francisco. Stations throughout three states have dropped Savage’s show, and eight big advertisers have pulled out.

Autism is a brain disorder that affects one in 150 people in the U.S. The exact symptoms and severity vary widely. For instance, some children struggle to speak words while others speak clearly but inappropriately about the social situation at hand.

One common trait is that autistic people can perceive certain everyday sensory input, sensations or changes in routine as intensely as non-autistic (neurotypical) people hear fingernails on a chalkboard, feel being held upside down or react to finding their front door wide open. An autistic child’s screaming is like a fight-or-flight response to these perceptions. Disciplining the child will not change the way he or she is wired.

Children who experience the autism spectrum do respond well to long-term intervention which develops language and social skills, while helping them build tolerance through gradual exposure to challenging situations and stimuli. As these issues are minimized, the ability to succeed in school is maximized.

### Big money and political reaction

Behind Savage is a wealthy industry, Talk Radio Network, which subjects 10 million listeners at 350 stations to his tirades. Its CEO, Mark Master, has not disciplined Savage for his inappropriate behavior. In a statement on its website TRN says the “phrasing was inartful” but that Savage means well when taken in context.

TRN extended Savage’s lucrative contract, even though he brought anger upon them before. In August 2007 San Francisco’s Board of Supervisors condemned him in a

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#### Workers World

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Vol. 50, No. 30 • Aug. 7, 2008  
Closing date: July 30, 2008

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Workers World (ISSN-1070-4205) is published weekly except the first week of January by WW Publishers, 55 W. 17 St., N.Y., N.Y. 10011. Phone: (212) 627-2994. Subscriptions: One year: \$25; foreign and institutions: \$35. Letters to the editor may be condensed and edited. Articles can be freely reprinted, with credit to Workers World, 55 W. 17 St., New York, NY 10011. Back issues and individual articles are available on microfilm and/or photocopy from University Microfilms International, 300 Zeeb Road, Ann Arbor, Mich. 48106. A searchable archive is available on the Web at [www.workers.org](http://www.workers.org).

A headline digest is available via e-mail subscription. Subscription information is at [www.workers.org/email.php](http://www.workers.org/email.php).

Periodicals postage paid at New York, N.Y.

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to  
Workers World, 55 W. 17 St., 5th Floor,  
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# Cynthia McKinney gains write-in status in N. Carolina

By Dante Strobino  
Durham, N.C.

Presidential candidate Cynthia McKinney was in Durham, N.C., on July 22 to rally support for her Power to the People campaign. The North Carolina Greens had been organizing since McKinney's July 12 endorsement by the national Green Party to collect the 500 signatures of registered voters needed to allow McKinney to be a write-in candidate.

North Carolina has some of the harshest ballot-access laws requiring 2 percent of the population, or over 70,000 valid signatures, to qualify to be on the ballot. Only parties with hundreds of thousands

of dollars at their disposal can afford to organize to collect enough signatures to be eligible.

According to the N.C. Green Party, just over the 500 needed signatures were collected for her to be a write-in candidate. McKinney and the N.C. Green Party delivered the signatures to the Board of Elections on July 22, the cut-off day.

Following the delivery of petitions, a press conference was held where the N.C. Green Party, Southern Anti-Racist Network, Workers World Party and its youth group Fight Imperialism, Stand Together (FIST) spoke about their support for McKinney. Many mentioned the importance of an African-American woman like McKinney being in the fore-



PHOTO: COURTESY OF GREEN PARTY

Left to right: FIST member Rima L'amir, Theresa El-Amin, David Josué, Cynthia McKinney, Dante Strobino and Rev. David Foy at Know Bookstore. In front of McKinney is Green Party member and FIST activist, Elena Everett. Josué is McKinney's staff assistant.

front of the struggles against racism, war and the oppression of the international working class.

After the press conference, Theresa El-Amin—long-time civil rights fighter, Southern Anti-Racist Network organizer and recent Green Party member—organized for McKinney to speak at a local Black bookstore in Durham called Know Bookstore.

The bookstore was packed with dozens of supporters. McKinney spoke strongly about her work around fighting for reparations and put that in the context of the historic efforts made by W.E.B. Du Bois, who in 1948 brought the cause of African-American people to the U.N. McKinney stated that in response to DuBois's efforts, he was told by the NAACP and others, "Now is not the time."

McKinney elaborated on Paul Robeson bringing a similar complaint about the unjust treatment of African Americans to the U.N. in 1952, but he was also rebuffed. She was able to convince other members of the Congressional Black Caucus to attend the World Conference Against

Racism in Durban, South Africa, in 2001 only to return to the 9/11 disaster, which, once again, put the struggle for recognition of the international call for reparations on the back burner.

McKinney then talked about her other positions, including getting the U.S. immediately out of Iraq, Afghanistan and everywhere and her support for a free Palestine. She raised questions of democracy and talked at length about the hundreds of millions of dollars of capital being lost by African Americans due to the current housing foreclosure crisis.

After her speech, the crowd asked for her thoughts on two controversial questions—Zimbabwe and Darfur. She tied Zimbabwe to the land question and the issue of Western interference. On Darfur, she raised Western meddling, oil interests and geopolitics. She never once attacked the governments of Zimbabwe and the Sudan; in fact, she defended them on the basis of support for self-determination.

*The writer spoke at the July 22 press conference representing FIST and Workers World Party.*



WW PHOTO: MAUREEN SKEHAN

Youth at Dorchester march, July 22.

## March focuses on HIV/AIDS crisis

By Gerry Scoppettuolo  
Dorchester, Mass.

The HIV State of Emergency Campaign rolled through Dorchester on July 18 in the form of a street march organized by Healing Our Land and the New Era Movement. The marchers, led by Minister Franklin Hobbs, used loudspeakers, spirited prayer and urgent calls to make their way to the Boys and Girls Club.

With the African-American community still bearing the heaviest weight of the HIV epidemic in Massachusetts, the marchers were determined to carry the message "Get tested, know your status" to anyone in earshot. The march was part of the "Test One Million" campaign recently launched by the Black AIDS Institute. It has been shown that when people with HIV status learn their status, they dramatically reduce their risk behavior. This can lead to fewer infections in the community.

HIV prevention programs targeting communities of color in Massachusetts have been poorly funded and have failed to curtail the epidemic. Institutionalized racism in all systems of health care funding, including HIV prevention and treatment, have resulted in countless HIV diagnoses that might have been prevented in the African-American community in Massachusetts and elsewhere.

This true crime against humanity is what has motivated the creation of the New Era Movement in Boston, led mostly by youth of color.

By the time the July 18 demonstration reached the Boys and Girls Club in the Mattapan neighborhood, it had attracted significant support. Karen Payne, president of the Boston NAACP, urged the activists to keep up their visibility campaign.

Other speakers included former City Councilor Garreth Saunders and local HIV activist Larry Day, who lives with HIV infection. In comparing the government's response to the HIV epidemic to Hurricane Katrina, Day stated, "Hurricane HIV/AIDS has been ravaging our community for over 25 years. Look how our government has treated the people of Louisiana. We can't wait for the city and state governments to save us."

Support for the march came from many quarters, including Boston City Councilor Charles Yancey, Minister Dan Walker of the New Jerusalem Baptist Church in Framingham and Minister Henry Tweah of Grace Church of All Nations. Youth activists from the New Era Movement and the Boston Youth Organizing Project passed out surveys along the route and urged people to get tested. Other support came from the Design Studio, the Stonewall Warriors and the Women's Fightback Network.

Under capitalism, government obeys the orders of private-sector drug and insurance companies first; what is left after profit and war spending is trickled down to the suffering masses. This profit model dictates policy to public health departments at all levels who claim they are powerless to increase needed funding while \$341 million a day is spent on Iraq and Afghanistan (www.costofwar.com). Corporate state control then extends to government-funded AIDS service nonprofits that are tightly controlled by their funders.

The result is needless death and suffering. In 2004-2005 African Americans in Massachusetts accounted for the largest number of new infections among those tested at public health clinics. The African-American population is barely one-thirteenth of the state population. □



Free Mumia activists Sundiata Sadiq and Suzanne Ross along with attorney Soffiyah Elijah speak in Harlem.

WW PHOTO: MIKE EILENFELDT

## Harlem meeting discusses Mumia's legal case

Sundiata Sadiq, Suzanne Ross and attorney Soffiyah Elijah spoke at a New York Free Mumia Abu-Jamal Coalition open meeting on July 25 in Harlem to explain the political implications in the latest phase of Mumia's legal appeals process dedicated to winning him a new trial.

On July 22 the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Third Circuit based in Philadelphia denied Mumia's petition that exposed the racist systematic exclusion of Black jurors by the prosecution during his original 1982 trial.

A jury convicted him on first degree murder charges that sent him to Pennsylvania's death row. Mumia's lawyers will now appeal this decision to the U.S. Supreme Court in late October. The options for Mumia are either execution or life in prison without parole. The movement will

continue to fight against both options.

The main message of the speakers at the July 25 meeting was to continue to remain politically vigilant and organize in the streets to win Mumia's freedom.

On Aug. 9 in Philadelphia, a forum is scheduled around the 30th anniversary of the unprovoked police attack on the MOVE organization. Just as Mumia was unjustly sent to death row for over 26 years, the MOVE 9 have been falsely imprisoned for 30 years. They were recently denied parole. Mumia's case will also be discussed at the Aug. 9 forum.

For more information on the forum, call International Concerned Family and Friends of Mumia Abu-Jamal at 215-476-8812 or the New York Free Mumia Coalition at 212-330-8029.

—Monica Moorehead



# Workers, banks and the credit crisis

By Fred Goldstein

Underneath the credit crisis that threatens the entire financial structure of U.S. capitalism is an overwhelming fact: large sections of the working class and the middle class are sinking under the burden of unsustainable debt. To make matters worse, 485,000 jobs have been lost in the last six months.

Most headlines are about the problems of Freddie Mac and Fannie Mae—two sweetly named financial bloodsuckers—and other financial institutions threatened with collapse. The crisis of the workers and oppressed who have been ensnared in the web of debt woven by the financial wizards of Wall Street is kept way in the background.

Treasury Secretary Henry Paulson and Federal Reserve Chair Ben Bernanke, in consultation with the banks, have got Congress to pass a \$300-billion bailout plan for Freddie and Fannie, which are privately owned banks. Congress threw \$4 billion into the legislation to help homeowners refinance, but left it to the banks' discretion as to whether they'll agree to the refinancing.

The great disparity in assistance—\$300 billion for the banks, \$4 billion for homeowners—speaks volumes about the priorities in Washington.

In fact, Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac played a key role in fostering the present crisis by buying up and packaging mortgages and selling them to speculators. The two banks together hold or guarantee almost half of the \$10.5 trillion in outstanding mortgage debt in the United States.

The intervention of the capitalist government as a guarantor of risky bank debt of unknown magnitude is a measure of the crisis. Washington has crossed a line and put the U.S. Treasury in the banking business.

Outstanding loans amount to trillions of dollars. With workers losing their jobs, suffering wage cuts and hikes in interest on adjustable rate mortgages, and the general economic condition of the masses deteriorating, neither of the banks really has the money to cover even a fraction of the potential defaults. For example, Fannie Mae has only \$38 billion to back up \$2.8 trillion in mortgage loans.

## Behind the crisis: raid on workers' wages

Bourgeois analysts and experts of all types offer up a wide variety of explanations for how this debt crisis arose. They debate who is to blame—the lender or the borrower, the swindler or the victim. But few if any go to the heart of the matter.

The present credit crisis arose because in recent decades finance capital has moved more and more aggressively to plunder the consumption fund of the working class. The working class is an exploited class under capitalism. The workers create wealth through their labor, getting wages to live on. The bosses keep the profits—which is the surplus value created by the workers. That has been the essence of capitalist exploitation since the origins of the system. That is the basis of class inequality and class antagonism.

Now, in addition to the profits taken directly from the workers by employers in the process of production, distribution and services, the financiers have waged a systematic campaign to get hold of larger and larger portions of the workers' wages outside the workplace, in the form of interest and fees. Workers' debt has become a huge source of profit for

*Finance capital has moved aggressively to plunder the consumption fund of the working class.*

layers of bankers, brokers, fund managers and other sharks. The working class has become more and more a debtor class during the same three decades in which the capitalists have been lowering wages, taking back benefits, busting unions and creating a low-wage society.

In a New York Times special report on July 20, Gretchen Morgenson said that consumer debt "stands at \$2.56 trillion, up 22 percent since 2000 according to the Federal Reserve Board." In addition, there was \$10.5 trillion in mortgage debt at the end of last year, more than double the \$4.8 trillion of just seven years ago.

The average household's credit card debt is \$8,565, up almost 15 percent since 2000. "College debt has more than doubled since 1995," wrote Morgenson. "The average student emerges from college carrying \$20,000 in educational debt."

Household debt overall, including mortgages and credit cards, represents 19 percent of household assets, according to the Federal Reserve Board. In other words, one fifth of everything people own is based on loans that still have to be paid off with interest to the banks.

But the most dramatic statistic concerning the extraordinary level of indebtedness of the masses is the Federal Reserve finding that "average household debt has swelled to 120 percent of annual income, up from 60 percent in 1984." (New York Times, July 19)

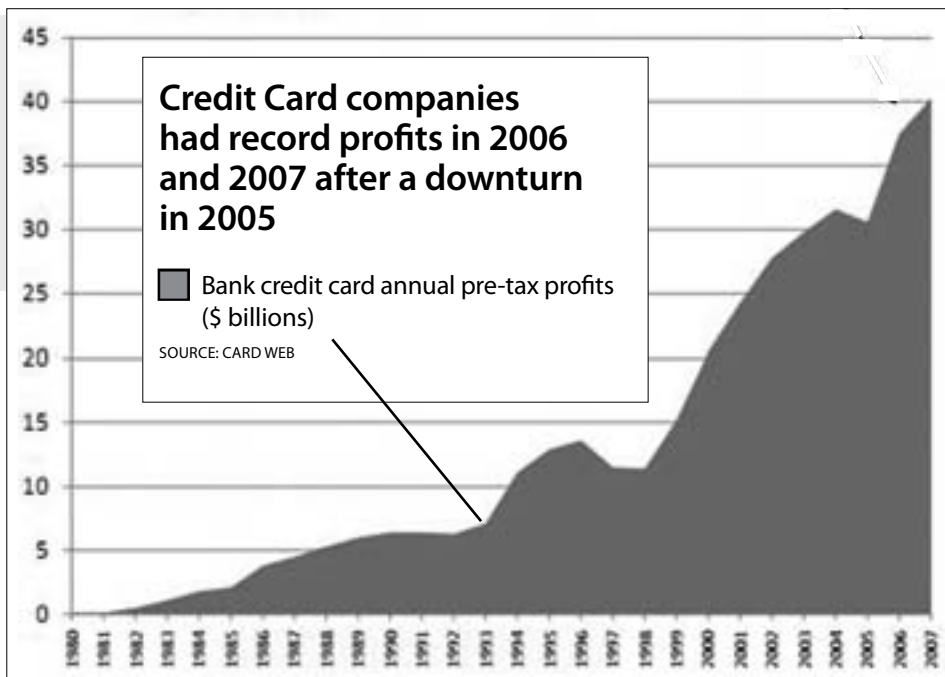
Workers owe more than they can ever earn.

## When bosses offer easy loans, workers beware!

During the 19th and early 20th century in the United States, the capitalist class was not interested in lending money to even the neediest workers. If the workers needed money they had to rely on the pawnbroker or the loan shark. The pawnbroker took the worker's valuables in return for a pittance. Loan sharks charged very high rates and failure to pay was often met by violence.

It was only with the development of mass production and "big ticket" items that the bosses were eventually compelled to lend the workers money. One of the earliest to do so, in the middle of the 19th century, was Singer Sewing Machine. A sewing machine cost \$100—more than any worker could afford at that time. Singer began to sell on the installment plan, with interest included in the payments. Once mass production really took hold in the 20th century, General Motors began the GM Acceptance Corporation in 1919 to facilitate the sale of its autos. Sears Roebuck, the pioneer mass retailer, was famous for selling on credit in order to bring customers to its chain. Soon all manner of items were sold on the installment plan.

The interest charged was another source of profit for the boss, but it was secondary. The primary purpose of extending credit to the workers was to get customers to buy a specific commodity or spend their money in a particular establishment. Repossession was common when workers lost their jobs or fell behind for whatever reason.



It was not until the 1970s that exotic mortgages were devised. The 1980s saw the rise of universal credit cards, first with Bank of America and Chase Manhattan. This changed the fundamental aim of lending to the workers. It was no longer a stimulus to buy a particular product or patronize a particular establishment but a way of making profit for the bankers through charging interest.

The universal credit card could be used for anything. It was a device to get workers in debt. The more needy they were, the more certain they were to miss a payment and be subject to sharp hikes in interest rates, fees and penalties of all kinds.

A similar process took place with the development of mortgage-backed securities and other complex debt instruments. The purpose of a mortgage was no longer to make a loan and collect the principal and interest from the borrower. The loan was sold and packaged the moment after it was made. The original lender had no interest in the credit-worthiness of the borrower. The loan passed through the hands of other bankers, money managers, perhaps hedge funds or other Wall Street sharks, and could go around the world.

The fees charged by all the intermediaries in the financial processes stimulated a voracious appetite and high demand for more loans. About four years ago an intensified assault was made on the working class and particularly on Black and Latin@ borrowers. Lying and swindling reached new heights and subprime mortgages were targeted at the oppressed and working class communities.

## Credit bubble depends on workers' future wages

The underlying assets beneath all this speculation, the source of future funds that give the bonds their market value, is the expectation of collecting a portion of the future wages of the workers. Trillions of dollars of fictitious paper value are leveraged upon the diminishing wages of the working class.

Credit card companies and the mortgage industry make loans not to create wealth or make things available to workers that they could not otherwise have. They do it to convert the workers' wages into bankers' profits, through the collection of usurious interest—up to 28 percent—and fees.

Karl Marx discussed interest-bearing capital as a factor that both advanced production through the extension of credit and also led to speculation and crises. In Marx's time, the banks collected interest mainly from the capitalists and it came out of their profits. Interest payments from workers, on the other hand,

come out of wages. Both have the same form—interest—but an opposing class character.

In recent years, particularly since 2000, the capitalist economy has grown very slowly in terms of production and services. After the collapse of the dot-com bubble in 2000, the Federal Reserve System under Alan Greenspan pumped credit into the economy. He did it by lowering interest rates from 6.5 percent in late 2000 to 1.0 percent by June 2003.

Greenspan was trying to counteract a "jobless recovery." However, more than 590,000 jobs were lost during the sluggish recovery from 2001 to 2003. Pumping cheap money to the banks did not create many jobs. Instead the credit stoked a housing boom that has now come crashing down. From 1985 to 2002, houses sold at 14 times the annual cost of rent. In early 2006 houses sold at 25 times rent.

This boom caused such overproduction that enough houses are now on the market to satisfy demand for the next two-and-a-half years without building a single new one. (New York Times, July 19)

## It all boils down to capitalist profit system

Why do workers buy homes that will make them debt servants for decades? Because this profit-making capitalist society, the richest in the world, won't build decent, affordable housing for the mass of the people. That is the starting point of the housing foreclosure crisis. There should be another alternative: affordable housing as a right.

Students end up in debt because education is tied to profit. It should be free. Workers go into debt to make ends meet because wages are low or they lose their jobs. Medical debt arises because there's no universal health care and because the health-care system is structured to make profits for insurance companies, hospitals, drug companies and the medical-industrial complex.

The system of production for profit and not human need is the origin of the debt crisis of the workers and the financial crisis of the system.

Why should workers have to resort to credit cards to keep afloat when they get a layoff or a wage cut? Jobs should be a right.

The task of the moment is to fight for a moratorium on foreclosures and evictions, for the right to a job, to universal health care, to affordable education and a bailout of the workers, not the bankers.

To fund this basic program one could start with turning the military budget into a fund for human needs. □



## DETROIT

# Struggle stops eviction of Rubie Curl-Pinkins

By Kris Hamel  
Detroit

Countrywide and its parent corporation, Bank of America, were forced to back down and stop foreclosure proceedings against Detroit resident Rubie Curl-Pinkins due to a mass outcry and militant struggle.

During a July 18 demonstration outside Pinkins' home, Moratorium NOW! Coalition to Stop Foreclosures and Evictions activists, along with community members and others, stepped up the struggle to stop her eviction July 25 from the home she has owned for 45 years. This demonstration was covered widely by local media.

Pinkins, a disabled African-American senior, had her home paid off but was lured into a predatory loan from Countrywide. When her medical bills became overwhelming, she was unable to keep up with the mortgage payments, which had an interest rate of over 10 percent.

Pinkins successfully obtained a reverse mortgage to pay off the subprime loan in full, but Countrywide refused to accept payment. Her attorney, Vanessa Fluker, was able to get a court order extending the eviction date to July 25.

On July 22 the Moratorium NOW! Coalition and outraged community members took their protest to Bank of America in downtown Detroit. They refused to back down after the bank called the police, who demanded they move away from the building entrance. They chanted, "The police don't know the law!" and "Justice for Rubie Curl-Pinkins!" as they kept up the demonstration.

During the protest, attorney Fluker and Nikki Curl, Pinkins' daughter, went inside and demanded to speak to a Bank of America vice-president. They were immediately granted a meeting. Obviously, the vice-president was well aware of the demonstration and the bad publicity it was generating. Curl said, "I was treated like a queen" at the meeting. The vice-president promised Fluker and Curl that no eviction would take place July 25, nor the following week.

That same day, the Bank of America vice-president and the bank's general counsel in North Carolina were bombarded with phone calls from Detroit-area attorneys demanding to know why Pinkins was being evicted.

Later that afternoon, attorneys from Trott & Trott, which represent Countrywide, called Fluker to begin negotiating a resolution. On July 25, a Wayne County Circuit Court judge entered an order to extend the redemption period and dismiss the case against Pinkins. Fluker was able to work out a settlement agreement that will allow Pinkins to pay off her loan to Countrywide.

Buoyed by this victory won from struggle, activists are planning a press conference, victory rally and celebration at the Pinkins home when the Countrywide loan is extinguished in early August.

Organizers are doubling their efforts for a moratorium to stop all foreclosures and evictions in Michigan and to keep pressure on the banks to reopen and renegotiate all predatory loans. They continue to build for the Sept. 17 march on Lansing to press for passage of SB 1306, a two-year moratorium law introduced by State Senator Hansen Clarke.

Nationwide, over two million homeowners are facing foreclosure over the next year alone.



WW PHOTOS: ALAN POLLOCK

Ms. Pinkins, in wheelchair, at July 22 Bank of America protest.

Donations to help this struggle can be sent to Moratorium NOW! Coalition, 23 E. Adams, 4th Floor, Detroit, MI 48226. Go the coalition's website at [www.moratorium-mi.org](http://www.moratorium-mi.org) for more information.



## Mint farmer joins moratorium struggle

At the Moratorium NOW! Coalition to Stop Foreclosures and Evictions meeting held on July 26 in Detroit, Linette Crosby, owner of an historic mint farm in St. Johns, Mich., came to tell her story and get involved in the struggle. St. Johns, known as "Mint City USA," is a rural farming community 20 miles north of Lansing, the state capital.

Crosby and her brothers own a spearmint and peppermint farm that was started by their great-grandfather 95 years ago. Now the farm and their family home are in foreclosure. Their lender, Greenstone Farm Credit, has attached \$30,000 in attorney fees to their mortgage.

Crosby reported that there used to be 60 mint farms in the St. Johns area, but now there are only four. Development by real estate interests is rampant in the area, including property bought by anti-union conglomerate Wal-Mart.

Ironically, the Crosby farm donates free mint compost that is used on the grounds of the state capitol building.

Crosby said she has the support of the community and plans to do outreach at the 20th Annual St. Johns Mint Festival on Aug. 8-10 to garner support for her family's struggle against foreclosure and to popularize the growing movement in Michigan for a moratorium to stop all foreclosures and evictions. Mark Crosby, Linette's brother is the Grand Marshall of this year's festival. Coalition activists will join her in St. Johns for these efforts during the Mint Festival, which usually draws about 60,000 people.

—Kris Hamel

# Foreclosures, economic crisis are hot issues at forum in L.A.

By John Parker  
Los Angeles

An important labor-community fightback forum was held July 26 at the office of Service Employees' Local 721 in Los Angeles. More than 150 people of many nationalities attended the forum for various reasons. Some came for information needed to immediately address their personal foreclosure crisis; others came for the free legal consultation. But what drew the biggest portion of the audience was the thirst for a fightback strategy.

The forum was organized by the Harvard Boulevard Block Association, the International Action Center and Local 721. Given the deepening economic hardships, it was not surprising that the SEIU hall was packed. On July 24, the front-page headline in the Los Angeles Times pointed to record home foreclosures and defaults—a record that had never been surpassed since those statistics had been recorded—until now.

"We're going to build a million-person march to stop foreclosures," said Rosie Martinez, chair of the Latino Caucus of Local 721, an 85,000-member local. Martinez also motivated a proposed Sept. 17th march on the City Council, which was part of the plan laid out by Evelyn Levings of the Harvard Boulevard Block Club. Levings read the Club's resolu-

tion to be presented to the City Council demanding a moratorium on foreclosures and evictions.

BAYAN-USA speakers Kuusela Hilo and Terrie Cervas explained how the suffering of Filipino workers, forced to migrate to the U.S. due to its neocolonialist economic policies in the Philippines, was similar to the suffering of native-born workers here. A nonprofit housing organization provided useful information on the foreclosure crisis's effects on Los Angeles County.

Activist Jerry Goldberg of the Moratorium NOW! Coalition to Stop Foreclosures and Evictions based in Michigan had the crowded auditorium cheering and "heated up."

He explained how, as a lawyer, even if he won a foreclosure case every day, it would amount to only 365 saved homes a year, while the number of foreclosures in Michigan in one month alone can reach 12,000. "My individual effort is like putting my thumb in the hole of a dam to hold back the water. This is not an individual problem. It's a social one," Goldberg stated.

A representative from the IAC spoke on the empty solutions offered by the politicians to this economic crisis: "Governor Schwarzenegger wants to roll back all city employees' wages—about 200,000 people—back to the minimum wage of

\$6.55 per hour, while gas prices soar and people already can't pay their mortgages. It's as if this was a Hollywood spoof about his political career, but it's not. It's what they have to offer as a solution—one made on our backs. Well, we've got another solution—that's a moratorium—and we won't allow business as usual until we get it."

State Assemblypersons Mike Eng and Mike Davis both came and spoke in support of a moratorium.

Television coverage of the forum included Telemundo and Channel 4, a NBC affiliate (KNBC), along with national and local radio stations which conducted numerous interviews.

KNBC interviewed Bernice Hunt, a 48-year resident in South Central Los Angeles, who expressed the unimaginable reality of having to leave a home which held all the experiences of her family's entire life.

Suggestions were taken from forum attendees about what demands should be made to the governor, mayor and city council. This information will be used to begin the first meeting of the newly established Labor-Community Coalition to Stop Foreclosures and Evictions that will meet at the union office.

*John Parker spoke at the July 26th forum representing the International Action Center.*



HOUSTON

Activists honor Panther leader Carl Hampton

By Gloria Rubac  
Houston

Black Panther leader Carl Hampton was remembered and honored as a true leader of the people on the 38th anniversary of his assassination by the Houston police on July 26, 1970.

Carl Hampton wanted to begin a chapter of the Panthers in Houston in 1969 when he returned there after working with the Black Panther Party in Oakland, Calif. But the party was not authorizing new chapters at the time. Recognizing that the BPP was the first party of the people, he decided to form Peoples Party II in Houston.

His former comrades along with Houston activists of all ages gathered in Houston's Third Ward on the vacant lot on Dowling Street where the Panther headquarters once stood. A large table held copies of old newspaper articles, posters of Hampton, photos of many of the Black Panther Party leaders, photocopies of Black Panther newspapers, and T-shirts with Hampton's photo on the front and a quote by James Aaron on the back.

In near 100-degree weather the crowd then caravanned to the cemetery where Hampton is buried. People took turns remembering him and talking about his life.

Speakers included former Panther Aaron, who took leadership of the organization after Hampton's murder; former Panther Ayanna Ada; and Green Party activist Alan Purium.

Former Panther Sensei Benton read a short biography of Hampton written by Brother Boko Freeman, who had been the Minister of Culture and a leader of the Houston Chapter, who now lives in Atlanta. "On July 26, 1970, Carl Bernard Hampton, one of Black America's most articulate, courageous and heroic young leaders was ruthlessly slain by the Houston Police Department's Criminal Intelligence Division. At the age of 21, Carl was a tire-



WW PHOTO: GLORIA RUBAC

Paying respects at Carl Hampton's gravesite, July 26.

less organizer who worked day and night. ... Armed with determination to see his people free from the oppression, exploitation and degradation by a racist and corrupt system bent on the destruction of Blacks and people of color ... he rallied people around the issue of police brutality and murder. ... Speaking with much power and authority, he was able to capture the hearts and minds of the people and therefore their respect and admiration."

Benton also read an anonymous letter written to Hampton after his death. It was from a young man who wandered into the Panther headquarters while looking for a job. He said Hampton talked with him for a good while and bought him a soda even though he couldn't afford it.

The letter concluded: "Maybe you had to die for what you stood for. You were an intelligent young man and devoted to your people. So I shall close, Carl, and hope you didn't die for no reason. I shall close with my tear-stained eyes, for I loved you so. Good night, Carl Hampton, although I

just met you one time, good night. Your 30-minute friend and brother—although you didn't know my name, but you knew my face. Goodbye."

After flowers were left on the grave, the activists returned to Third Ward. Then two long-time activists, Ester King and Ovide Duncantell, who were both on Dowling Street on the night of the murder, told what they had seen and what the police had done 38 years earlier.

They took the crowd to the exact spot where Hampton had been shot and told how the cops had been allowed to use a three-story church as the base of their military operation. "The minister of Saint John's had cancelled the Sunday evening services and allowed the cops to take over the church. While there were cops and news media on the roof of the church, Carl was shot from the second story where you now see the stained glass windows," said King.

"Carl was shot standing right here next to this pole," described Duncantell. "After

they shot Carl with illegal, hollow-point, dum-dum bullets, he lay in the street bleeding profusely. The Panthers and the community responded to the cops, using arms of their own. Many people were shot that night, including Johnny Coward, who had the heel of his foot shot off, and Bartee Haile, a white leader of the John Brown Revolutionary League. Both were later charged with attempted murder of a police officer. About 60 people were arrested, including Mickey Leland, who was later elected to the U.S. House of Representatives. A woman who drove down the street dodging a hail of bullets somehow picked up Carl's body and took him to the hospital."

Benton added, "All we know about this woman is that her name was Sophia. We would like to find her."

A legacy of heroism

After leaving the scene of Hampton's murder, the crowd reassembled down the street at the Project Row House Park to further remember Hampton. As Peoples Party III leader Kenyha Shabazz was speaking on a loud sound system, a woman entered the park and said she was passing by and heard the name of Carl Hampton. She wondered what was happening.

When told that Hampton was being honored, she proceeded to tell the crowd that she had known Hampton and how much he was loved by the community. When asked her name, she responded, "Sophia."

She was the woman who had picked up Hampton's bleeding body and tried to help save his life. The crowd became electrified, since just minutes before they were discussing trying to find this woman and honor her for her heroism that night in 1970. The former Panthers asked her to describe what she did when Hampton was shot.

"I put him into my pickup truck and took all his Panther identification off him and admitted him to the hospital in my husband's name so they would treat him. But Carl was in and out of consciousness, and I am not sure he was even alive when I got him to the hospital. I loved him so much," she said while crying. "I can't believe they murdered him. He was so important, he loved all people, and I have never forgotten him," she said to a stunned crowd.

Capturing the essence of the day, Benton told Workers World, "The legacy of Carl Hampton is seriously important because so much history has been buried. Carl is the focal point, the epicenter of our past struggles, and it is vitally important that this history be exposed. There need to be some heroes and heroines in the Black community, people that the community can look up to. Carl is a shining example of positive work and inspires us still.

"The cops murdered Carl without any repercussion or investigations," he continued. "This needs to be brought out. We don't need a monument or a symbol but some serious work in the community. As we were gathering tonight, a man was in the dumpster looking for a meal. Across the street from where Carl was shot, I saw that people are camping and living in the empty lot. The brother gave his life so that all could have a place to stay and clothes on their backs and good food to eat. The very issues that Carl struggled around and gave his life for still need addressing. This is a human struggle, and Carl is a legacy of that struggle. We want to keep this struggle alive."

"The thing that dragged me into the

Continued on next page

Youth dies as result of Taser abuse

By Larry Hales

On Jan. 17 Baron "Scooter" Pikes, a first cousin of Mychal Bell, one of the Jena 6, died after being taken into police custody in Winnfield, La. At the time of his death, he was a 21-year-old healthy African American. He was officially pronounced dead shortly after arriving at the hospital.

The official story given by Scott Nugent, the 21-year-old white arresting officer and the son of a police chief who committed suicide after allegations of fraud, has been refuted by witnesses.

According to the police, when Nugent spotted Pikes, who allegedly had an outstanding warrant for drug possession, Pikes ran, was caught by another officer, and Tased by Nugent in order to be subdued. In Nugent's report, he claimed that Pikes was handcuffed on the ground and that when Pikes refused to get up, he Tased him. Nugent claimed that Pikes became ill on the way to the station and told the officers he suffered from asthma and was high on PCP and crack cocaine.

All totaled, Scooter Pikes was Tased 9 times within a 14-minute time span. The last two shocks were administered as Pikes was pulled out of the police car. He had gone unconscious before that. The ambulance was called after Pikes slumped over in the chair at the police station.

According to people in a grocery store

who were shopping at the time he was apprehended, Pikes pleaded with the officers, "Please, you all got me. Please don't Tase me again."

Pikes' autopsy proved he did not have PCP or crack cocaine in his system and he did not have asthma.

Dr. Randolph Williams, the Winn Parish coroner, ruled the death a homicide and listed the cause of death as "cardiac arrest following nine 50,000-volt electroshock applications from a conductive electrical weapon." Dr. Michael Baden, a well-known forensic pathologist whom Williams consulted, stated the case could be considered "torture." (chicagotribune.com, July 19)

The Winnfield Police Department Policy on Taser use is a testament to the criminal use of the device. Their own policy prohibits its use against someone in handcuffs. The makers of the device warn: "minimize repeated, continuous, and/or simultaneous exposures."

According to CNN, "In the year since Winnfield police received Tasers, officers have used them 14 times, according to police records—with 12 of the instances involving black suspects. Ten of the 14 incidents involved Nugent, who has no public disciplinary record." Nugent has been fired but has not been charged with Pikes' killing.

Amnesty International catalogued 152 deaths due to Taser misuse from 2001

to 2006. Dalia Hashad, director of the Domestic Human Rights Program at Amnesty International USA, said, "One-hundred fifty-two deaths tied to a 'less lethal' weapon should raise a red flag. ... If a dictator mandated the abuse of these weapons, the United States government would be quick to call it torture. But is it any less painful when an American is shocked time and again? U.S. agencies should be concerned about using a tool with a record like this one."

Many oppressed people are familiar with the common refrain: "He or she was resisting arrest." It has been used time and again to justify brutal tactics by the police, and often it means simply being a person of color in the wrong place at the wrong time.

The official story told by eyewitnesses and the results from the coroner seem to corroborate what many have long known of the police: that Pikes is another victim of state-sponsored, hired thugs in blue who terrorize and brutalize people in oppressed communities.

The killing of Pikes at the hands of the police is nothing new. Police brutality is rampant throughout racist U.S. society. More and more Taser abuse is responsible for deaths by the police.

The writer is a national leader of Fight Imperialism, Stand Together (FIST). Contact FIST@workers.org. □





pton

Party was members' dedication to the people," explained former member Bobby Reed. "Their love just grabbed me. They would go without in order to serve the people, and I had to be a part of that."

Former Panther Ayanna Ada suggested that "funds be raised to buy a headstone for Carl's grave and that by his birthday in December or at least by next summer on July 26, we gather around that headstone to again remember Carl."

Former Panthers and The Station Museum, which is hosting an exhibit of Black Panther Party art, including photos, newspapers and historic posters, organized the memorial for Carl Hampton. The following day the museum held a film showing of "The Murder of Fred Hampton." □

IOWA

Thousands march to free immigrants

Continued from page 1

was taking place, the New York Times ran a lengthy front-page article on the horrendous working conditions endured by the immigrant workers at Agriprocessors. Workers bravely offered evidence that the company has violated numerous state and federal labor statutes. Horrors include children engaged in dangerous work, workers forced to work shifts of twelve hours and longer, verbal and physical abuse, and sexual harassment.

Yet rather than charge the company for its crimes, the federal government chose to arrest the workers who are the victims of this abuse. After serving their five-month sentences, the undocumented workers stand to be deported. Families are heartbroken by the separation and struggling to survive without even the meager wages they depended on.

The Times story did not describe the brutality of the ICE raid, the largest in U.S. history. In the well-planned military operation, 900 armed agents treated the workers worse than livestock, taking them all to a fairground, shackling and handcuffing them, and coercing them into pleading guilty. Nor did the Times article mention the planned national demonstration called by outraged Jewish and Christian organizations in solidarity with the workers.

Jewish, Catholic and Lutheran clergy led a prayer service preceding the march. During and after the march, which stopped briefly outside the Agriprocessors plant, speakers included former workers, religious leaders and the mayor of Postville. A hateful group of counter-demonstrators numbered no more than 100.

Just prior to the march, the leaders of JCA and JCUA were able to meet with the management of Agriprocessors. They asked for an immediate contribution of \$100,000 to the workers' relief fund, back pay to the detained workers, and full transparency around the issue of worker treatment. The company claimed to have already taken those steps, though none of the workers has gotten a check. "Promises are not enough," JCUA Executive Director Jane Ramsey stated at the rally.

For the detained workers and their families the nightmare is by no means over, but the huge march gave the terrorized community a much-needed boost of solidarity.

Martha Grevatt has been a UAW Chrysler worker for 20 years.

HARTFORD, CONN.

Residents speak in favor of immigrant-friendly law

Special to Workers World  
Hartford, Conn.

Is defending the rights of undocumented immigrants an issue that only concerns Latin@s or only immigrants? Not if the July 21 public hearing before the Hartford, Conn., city council was any indication.

Nearly 150 people packed the sweltering council chambers for more than two hours as speaker after speaker urged the passage of an immigrant-friendly city ordinance that would bar police or any other city employees from asking residents about or providing information about immigration status to the federal government.

More than forty speakers, including whites, Latin@s, African-Americans, West Indians and South Asians, repeatedly called on the city to respect and protect Hartford's racial and cultural diversity with a law that would affirm that all city residents have equal rights to access services and participate in the community. Not a single person in the room spoke against the ordinance.

Among the most compelling speakers

at the public hearing was Cesar Torres, a Peruvian immigrant who was deported in 2002 after he reported a murder to the Hartford Police Department. Both Torres and his attorney, Kristin Hoffman, described how his efforts to get justice for a friend led to his being separated for four years from his wife and newborn baby.

Several courageous undocumented immigrants who openly gave their names when testifying described Hartford immigrants living in rat-infested apartments without heat. Landlords threatened to turn them over to Immigration and Customs Enforcement if they complained about these inhumane conditions.

Others spoke of employers who refused to pay wages that were owed and threatened to call the police if workers tried to hold them accountable. All the speakers emphasized that barring city police and other city employees from asking about immigration status would help to dispel some of the fear that keeps immigrant families living in the shadows.

The campaign for the ordinance was initiated by the Hartford Immigrant Rights

Coalition, led by Hartford Areas Rally Together, and included the Center for Collaborative Justice, American Friends Service Committee, National Lawyers Guild, ACORN and others.

The ordinance was introduced by Luis Cotto, who was elected last November on the Working Families Party ticket. Working Families holds two of the nine council seats, the Democratic Party holds six, and the Republican Party only one. All but the one Republican council member have indicated their intent to vote for the ordinance.

If the ordinance is passed at the next city council meeting on Aug. 11, Hartford will be the second Connecticut city to affirm the rights of immigrant residents to equal treatment. Last year, New Haven introduced an Elm City ID Card that permits all residents to obtain an identification card that can be used to access city services as well as for other purposes. Immigrant activists and solidarity advocates say that a success in Hartford will increase the momentum for similar measures by other cities. □

Activists protest racist sheriff, shock jock

By Paul Teitelbaum  
Tucson, Ariz.

On July 10, arch-racist Maricopa County Sheriff Joe Arpaio came to Tucson to promote his new book at a local Barnes & Noble. He was met by a protest of 100 people whose continuous marching and chanting outside the bookstore disrupted his book signing and live radio interview. As part of this protest an empty piñata with the likeness of Sheriff Arpaio was smashed to bits by local youth.

Arpaio bills himself as "America's Toughest Sheriff." Not only is he racist and xenophobic but inhumane and cru-

el as well. Arpaio has erected a tent city jail in Phoenix where temperatures have been reported as high as 150 degrees in the summer.

Arpaio reportedly serves inmates green bologna for their two meals daily and shackles them into chain gangs for eight hours each day. Approximately 70 percent of the jail population is awaiting trial, which means they have not been convicted of any offense. No wonder his jails have been condemned by Amnesty International. Arpaio is currently named in over 1,500 lawsuits, many of them for wrongful death.

On July 11, Tucson right-wing radio talk

show host "Jon Justice" of 104.1 FM "The Truth" launched a rabidly racist campaign to have immigrant rights activist and Tucson May 1st Coalition leader Isabel Garcia fired from her position as a Pima County Legal Defender. Beside the lies and fear-mongering that he spews on-air, Jon J posted a YouTube video of himself with a piñata with Garcia's likeness, fondling and caressing it and making sexist comments about "wanting to take it home with me" and racist comments about "chorizo" and "viva la raza."

Tucson activists led by Derechos Humanos, the organization that Isabel  
Continued on page 9



WW PHOTO: DEIRDRE GRISWOLD

Yoomi Jeong, deputy secretary-general of the Korea Truth Commission, died on July 26 after a long, heroic battle against cancer. An obituary paying tribute to Jeong's contributions to the anti-imperialist struggle will appear in a future WW issue. Workers World Party's National Secretariat sent the following statement to the memorial for Yoomi Jeong held July 28 in South Korea:

iYoomi Jeong presente!

Yoomi Jeong was a true internationalist and at the same time a passionate, indomitable fighter for the Korean people and their cause of peace, national reunification and sovereignty. Her beautiful face honestly portrayed her inner beauty of character, selflessness, devotion to principle and determination to do what is right.

Workers World Party's commitment to the Korean struggle brought us into close comradeship with Yoomi. She never failed to help us understand the twists and turns of Washington's maneuvering. She was always there with analysis and action. She made time to accompany Party comrades on visits to Maehyang-ri, Gwangju, Kyengsan and other sites of great significance so we could help shine the light of truth on the terrible crimes committed by the U.S. imperialist military against the Korean people and their land.

We have been with her on picketlines at the U.S. Embassy in Seoul, surrounded by hundreds of cops. And we have been with her at demonstrations in New York and Washington against U.S. aggression in other parts of the world: Iraq, Haiti, Yugoslavia. She was always ready to express the solidarity of the struggling Korean people with their sisters and brothers in other lands.

Yoomi was very much in solidarity with the struggles of the workers and oppressed inside the U.S. She connected them to the struggles on the Korean peninsula against imperialism, and was especially supportive of the movement here to free Black revolutionary journalist Mumia Abu-Jamal and other political prisoners.

It is a terrible tragedy that this fearless, sweet, disciplined woman-comrade is gone. She is irreplaceable. Yet we are sure others have already come forward to carry on her work. We know that her loving partner Johnny and all her many friends and admirers did everything they could to help her. If that and her own amazing strength of will had been enough to overcome cancer, she would be alive and well today.

It is a great honor to have known and loved Yoomi Jeong. Her memory will inspire us for many years to come.

Deirdre Griswold  
Larry Holmes  
Teresa Gutierrez  
Monica Moorehead  
Sara Flounders  
Fred Goldstein  
National Secretariat members  
Workers World Party, USA

## Colombia's Permanent People's Tribunal

# Transnational corporations found guilty of serious crimes

By LeiLani Dowell  
Bogotá, Colombia

The Permanent People's Tribunal meeting here on July 23 condemned the Colombian government "for actions and for omissions in committing genocide." It also condemned transnational corporations—such as Coca-Cola—for the "serious, clear and persistent violations of the general principles and norms protecting civil, political, economic, social and ecological rights of the communities and individuals of the people of Latin America."

"There is a perception that Colombia is a paradise—the climate, natural resources and diversity, with coasts on both the Atlantic and Pacific oceans. But it's a paradise for a very few. It's a paradise for those who extract its resources, who exterminate its Indigenous. It's a paradise for narcotraffickers and paramilitaries."

So said William Guzman, leader of Colombia's SINALTRAINAL, the National Union of Food Industry Workers, to a U.S. delegation to Colombia organized by the U.S./Cuba Labor Exchange and International Action Center from July 20 to 28.

The delegation of activists, teachers and youth participated in the Final Audience of Judgment of the Permanent People's Tribunal, which examined the role of multinational corporations in the exploitation and repression of Colombian people, lands and resources.

An international panel of judges presided over the tribunal, including professors, human rights commissioners, doctors, judges and social workers from Argentina, Australia, Belgium, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Nicaragua, Spain and Switzerland.

Accused of transgressions against the Colombian people and lands were more than 30 multinational corporations. Many

International Action Center protest at the World Of Coca-Cola, Atlanta, July 22. Leaflets were given to visitors exposing the repressive role of Coca-Cola in Colombia against trade unionists.

WW PHOTO: DIANNE MATHIOWETZ



U.S. corporations—including Occidental Petroleum; travel agencies Aviatur and TQ3; food and agriculture corporations Chiquita Brands, Coca-Cola, Del Monte and Monsanto; mining companies Drummond and Muriel Mining; and military contractor DynCorp—were charged with crimes ranging from the use of paramilitaries to threaten and assassinate trade union leaders and massacre communities, to environmental destruction, contamination of the land and superexploitation of Colombia's natural resources.

A representative from CONVOCA, the National Committee in Defense of Water and Life, described the campaign for a national referendum to make potable water a fundamental right for all Colombians. As the Colombian people have seen their water bills increase by 300 percent in the last five years, corporations like Coca-Cola pay nothing for the water they use to produce their products.

Adolfo Perez Esquivel from Argentina, who won a Nobel Peace Prize in 1980 for his work in Latin America, presided over the tribunal. In opening remarks, he explained that every corporation under investigation by the tribunal had been contacted prior to the event and invited to defend themselves. While a few cor-

porations provided written responses questioning the "legitimacy" of a people's tribunal, the majority refused to respond and none attended.

On the final day of the tribunal, committees were formed to do further analysis and take action against these corporations.

In the days following the tribunal, the U.S. delegation conducted interviews with workers, students and Indigenous people, which provided a continuation of the evidence presented at the tribunal. It visited the Sabana region of Bogotá, where women work in the flower industry up to 15 hours a day with no labor rights, horrific working conditions and low pay. As a result of the pesticides the women are exposed to on the job and the lack of protective barriers between the flower facilities and people's homes, 10 percent of people in the community have some sort of disability or deformity. Like Coca-Cola, these flower companies pay nothing for the water they steal from the region.

The delegation met with members of the various Indigenous communities, including representatives of the National Indigenous Organization of Colombia. A man from the coastal region of Taganga in northern Colombia described how his Indigenous community had been pushed

off their lands by the government to create Tairona Park, which was then handed over to U.S. travel company Aviatur to be used as part of an ecotourism package. The Indigenous people who remain, mostly fishers, are now denied fishing rights by the government, and Aviatur is thinking about expanding into the surrounding area to build a hotel.

All the atrocities committed by the multinational corporations, it was explained, occur against a larger backdrop of political, military and economic repression at the hands of the Colombian government and with the strong assistance of the United States. Colombia is the third-largest recipient of U.S. aid, after Israel and Egypt, and a large amount of that is in the form of military equipment and training. While the Colombian government hands the rights to the country's resources over to these multinational corporations, it uses its military and extra-legal paramilitary units to squash dissent, push people off lands and instill a general sense of fear in the population.

Meanwhile, as countries throughout Latin America are resisting the continuing neoliberal, imperialist projects of the U.S.—in what Colombian economist Libardo Sarmiento called the "rebirth of the socialist project" in Latin America—Colombia remains the biggest ally of the U.S. and is considered by many to be the "Israel of Latin America." Sarmiento called right-wing Colombian President Alvaro Uribe's recent remarks to the Colombian congress, in which he urged increasing militarization, an ominous threat.

Sarmiento closed his remarks at the People's Permanent Tribunal with a clarification call: "Only a mass socialist movement can confront the great historic challenge to break with capitalism. This will be the only justice and only reparation to its victims."

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## Haiti's National Popular Party fund appeal

By G. Dunkel

The circumstances surrounding the June 26 lynching of two leaders of the National Popular Party in northern Haiti are still unclear. Adrien Michel and Prad Rémy Jean Vernet (Pèd) also worked with Haïti-Progrès, the newspaper which presents the views of the PPN.

The PPN is a national, anti-imperialist party with particularly strong ties to the peasants in northern Haiti. It evolved out of the mass movement known as the National Popular Assembly.

The PPN has asked the local authorities for permission to have an autopsy performed on the body of Adrien Michel in order to determine the cause of death. He died under police custody in a hospital in Cap-Haitien, the major city in northern Haiti.

There is only one coroner in Haiti, who lives in Port-au-Prince, and therefore would have to travel to Cap-Haitien to perform the autopsy.

The body of Pèd, killed on the spot, was dumped into the cemetery in St. Raphaël. His comrades and family would like to see him re-buried.

The families of the lynched men, Haïti-Progrès and the PPN have had to hire law-

yers in Port-au-Prince and Cap-Haitien, as well as pay around \$40 a day to keep Michel's body in the morgue. They will also have to pay very high costs for the autopsy, if one is authorized.

They intend to hold demonstrations throughout northern Haiti to push the local authorities to perform a careful investigation, especially since an underground propaganda campaign is being waged against the PPN and these two martyred militants.

All of this costs money—money that a struggle-oriented organization in a very poor country doesn't have. That is why "the PPN and Haïti-Progrès are appealing to all their sympathizers, progressives and democrats [to] ... rise to the occasion with financial assistance," according to an appeal they just issued. Beside the respect they are due, Pèd and Adrien Michel left behind families, wives and children who also need support.

Contributions can be sent to or dropped off at Haïti-Progrès, 1400 Flatbush Ave., 2nd Floor, Brooklyn NY 11210 (718-434-8100) or mailed to Haiti at #22, 1ère Impasse Lavaud, étage Lope de Vega, Port-au-Prince, Haiti 34-64-7845.

Make checks payable to Haïti-Progrès with PPN/St. Raphael on the memo line.



PHOTO: ROBERTO MERCADO

Ileana Núñez Mordoche and Larry Hamm celebrate July 26th anniversary.

## July 26 attack honored in New York

This July 26 marked the 55th year since the beginning of the armed struggle in Cuba, which culminated into a revolutionary victory led by Fidel Castro on Jan. 1, 1959. The opening salvo was the 1953 attack on the Moncada Barracks in Santiago de Cuba and the Carlos Manuel de Cespedes Barracks in Bayamo.

Here in New York at the 1199/SEIU union hall, hundreds of people gathered to honor this momentous event in human history and to show ongoing solidarity with the Cuban Revolution.

A new film on the five Cuban heroes entitled "Against the Silence in Our Own Voices: Families of the Cuban 5 Speak Out"

drew enthusiastic applause. There were many speakers, including Lucius Walker from IFCO/Pastors for Peace, who thanked activists for condolences after his partner, Mary Walker, passed away; Manolo Santos, a youth organizer; Zayd Shakur of the New Black Panther Party; and Althea Stevens from the Venceremos Brigade.

Larry Hamm from Newark, N.J.'s People's Organization for Progress introduced the special invited guest from the Permanent Mission of Cuba to the United Nations, Ileana Núñez Mordoche, with the words, "You measure a revolution by the kind of people the revolution produces."

—Larry Hales



# No reason to support U.S. occupation of Afghanistan

By John Catalinotto

Barack Obama’s international trip this July was historically unprecedented. On the one hand, it showed the enormous contrast with the hated and isolated George W. Bush. On the other, it re-focused attention on U.S. criminal wars and occupations in Afghanistan and Iraq.

The people of the U.S.—about 70 percent of them according to all recent polls—hate the war in Iraq and want it over. Even Iraq’s occupation Premier Nuri al-Maliki made a point of publicly supporting Obama’s plan for a 16-month pullout of U.S. troops. The puppet premier placed in office by U.S. bayonets, bombs and dollars wants the U.S. out soon, or at least wants to look like he does. Most U.S. allies are already out.

Obama and his opponent John McCain support the U.S. occupation of Afghanistan, as does the great majority of the U.S. ruling class. Washington’s NATO allies participate, despite the war’s unpopularity among their populations. The governments know this is the price for being considered part of the imperialist world.

Obama even asked for more German support during his triumphant Berlin speech, much to the chagrin of anti-war forces in Germany.

To most people in the U.S., the occupation of Iraq is directly connected to the lies of the Bush administration and the profits of the oil companies. And they’re right.

But regarding Afghanistan, the people

have been misled. Many believe that U.S. aims in Afghanistan were and are limited to a police action against al-Qaeda, against those allegedly responsible for the 9/11 attacks in 2001, and to the Taliban.

The truth is that the ruling group then in Afghanistan, the Taliban, had come to power with Pakistani backing at the end of a long civil war. Washington had financed and trained all the most reactionary forces, including Osama bin-Laden’s group, during that period in order to overthrow the revolutionary Afghan government that the Soviet Union had supported starting around 1980.

### Criminal invasion and occupation

Instead Washington carried out a full invasion and occupation of Afghanistan. The U.S. bombs killed many civilians then—starting October 2001—and continue to do so now. The U.S. puppet regime, headed by Hamid Karzai, has failed to stabilize the country, and Karzai is mockingly called “the mayor of Kabul,” Afghanistan’s capital.

Afghanistan’s 30 million people today are no more content with U.S. rule than a smaller population was with the failed British attempt to extend its empire there in the 19th century. While the “surge” was supposed to be taming Iraq, the resistance movement inside Afghanistan was growing. Now both the Democratic and Republican candidates campaign to place more U.S. and NATO troops inside Afghanistan.

In May and June more U.S.-NATO “coalition” forces were killed by the resistance in Afghanistan than were killed in Iraq. In mid-July the U.S. was forced to abandon a remote outpost in eastern Afghanistan after resistance fighters killed nine U.S. troops and briefly seized the area, near the village of Wanat in Nuristan province. U.S. officers remarked that the Afghan fighters had carried out a well-planned, sophisticated attack.

NATO slaughter of civilians continues. The United Nations estimates that 698 civilians were killed in the first six months of this year in Afghanistan; this compares

with 430 killed during the same period last year. Of those 698, some 255 were killed by NATO forces. Human Rights Watch says air strikes alone have been responsible for killing 119 civilians in 2008.

Like the puppet al-Maliki in Iraq, the puppet Karzai in Afghanistan has to put some distance between himself and the foreign occupiers. Karzai has made public statements asking NATO and U.S.-led coalition troops to avoid killing civilians. Still, three airstrikes in July killed 78 Afghan civilians.

Washington’s drive to increase both the U.S. and NATO’s role in Afghanistan is matched by its threats to expand the war over the border into Pakistan. U.S. Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice, speaking July 25 from Australia, demanded that the new Pakistani government—the U.S. client Gen. Musharraf has been driven almost completely out by a mass electoral movement—send troops against Taliban forces in its western provinces that are allegedly striking into Afghanistan from Pakistani territory. (Washington Post, July 25)

The border there between the two countries, arbitrarily placed by the British Empire in the 19th century, splits the Pashtun people, who have never recognized the line. By threatening a new intervention, Washington risks involving 170 million Pakistani people in a new phase of its attempt to control the Middle East and South Asia. The U.S. role in Afghanistan is another criminal, reactionary occupation that must be ended. □



WW PHOTO: PETER GILBERT

Pakistani activists protest in front of White House July 28 against violation of Pakistani sovereign airspace during visit of Pakistani Prime Minister Yusuf Raza Gillani with George Bush.

## India maneuvers behind scenes

# Nepal revolutionaries blocked from forming gov’t

By David Hoskins

Nepal has erupted in a wave of protests following the swearing in of Parmananda Jha as vice president on July 23. Jha had insisted on being sworn to the post in the Hindi language, spoken widely in neighboring India, rather than in Nepalese.

Many in Nepal saw this as confirmation that India was involved in maneuvering behind the scenes to lock the Communist Party of Nepal-Maoist (CPN-M) out of the new government. India has long interfered with Nepal’s internal politics and was a strong supporter of its reactionary monarch, King Gyanendra.

The CPN-M is Nepal’s largest party and immensely popular with the masses. It won more than half the directly elected seats in April elections for a Constituent Assembly (CA). For more than a decade

it led an armed struggle that finally toppled the king and led to the creation of a Constituent Assembly.

However, an alliance of bourgeois forces—the Nepali Congress Party (NC) and Jha’s group, the Madhesi Janadhikar Forum (MJF)—has recently been joined by another left group, the United Marxist Leninists (UML), in blocking the CPN-M from assuming the posts of national president and vice president and chairperson of the Constituent Assembly.

While the Maoist CPN-M is the largest party in the CA, and recently won a majority of the seats up for direct election, additional seats assigned under a proportional representation system keep it from having a voting majority. By forming a bloc, other parties were able to elect a Congress Party candidate to the post of president and a UML candidate as chair-

person of the assembly.

Jha’s decision to take the oath in Hindi angered many, even from student groups affiliated with the Congress Party and the UML. Together with CPN-M youth, they organized five consecutive days of angry protests. They chanted slogans, blocked vehicular traffic and burned effigies of Jha. Activists filed a case to demand that Jha retake the oath in the Nepali language. The Supreme Court then ordered Jha to submit a written explanation of his decision to take the oath in Hindi.

### Maoists rethink decision to form government

The CPN-M was widely expected to form the next government after its resounding victory in the April CA elections. The Maoists had worked diligently to forge an alliance with UML for elections to the presidential and vice presidential slots. That would have paved the way for the two communist parties to form a governing coalition under a Maoist prime minister. Together, the two parties control a solid majority of CA seats.

However, the CPN-M and UML were unable to agree on a presidential candidate. The UML pushed for its former secretary, Madhav Kumar Nepal. The CPN-M publicly stated it would support a UML candidate for president, but only if the candidate was a woman or from another oppressed group.

The Maoists ended up backing Ramraja Prasad Singh, an ethnic Madhesi, for the post of president, and women’s leader Shanta Shrestha for vice president. Singh is not a member of CPN-M but is widely viewed as Nepal’s first revolutionary republican because his group in 1985 carried out bombings against the royal palace, prime minister’s office and parliament.

Singh and Shrestha lost their bid for

the presidential and vice presidential slots once the UML joined the Congress-MJF coalition.

The CPN-M then publicly stated that it was unlikely to form the next government, since the alliance would threaten the stability of a CPN-M government, but could remain in the Constituent Assembly as an opposition party. Maoist Chairman Prachanda put forth three conditions for his party to form the next government.

Prachanda stated, “First, this so-called alliance should be broken. Second, a Common Minimum Program (CMP) should be forged—which should also reflect Maoists’ manifesto to a large extent. Third, there should be a guarantee that no one will engage in an exercise to pull down the government for at least two years until the constitution is written.” The initial reaction from the other parties was not positive.

The CPN-M and UML have been holding separate talks to see if they can form an alliance to lead the government, despite their earlier inability to find a common presidential candidate. Prachanda recently articulated his party’s view that the NC-UML-MJF alliance was aimed at restoring the Congress party leader, Girija Prasad Koirala, as prime minister.

“Domestic and foreign forces are conspiring to make Koirala prime minister. If that happens, that will be against the people’s mandate. We will bring people in the streets against such a move,” said Prachanda.

Prachanda also appeared to rule out the possibility that, if Koirala is reinstated, the CPN-M would return to the jungle to wage its armed struggle. He warned, “Petty kings are making every effort to block Maoists from climbing to power. If this effort continues we will push the petty kings into the jungle instead.” □

## Activists protest racist sheriff

Continued from page 7

Garcia co-chairs, launched a Stop Hate Radio campaign to show support for Garcia and denounce the racist lies and bigotry that stations like 104.1 FM spew. The radio station is part of the Journal Broadcasting Group which owns 52 newspapers, 35 radio stations, 12 television stations and 121 on-line media services throughout the country. It owns an ABC-affiliate TV station and four radio stations, including 104.1 in Tucson alone.

Activists compiled a list of the sponsors who run ads on the Jon Justice show and called them, requesting that they withdraw their advertising. Many businesses were unaware that their advertising package with the Journal Broadcasting

Group included 104.1 FM. Enough sponsors withdrew their advertising that the YouTube video was taken down and Jon J no longer screams for the firing of Isabel Garcia on his morning show.

By joining together in solidarity, the progressive community here managed to wound a tentacle of a giant media corporation. The Stop Hate Radio campaign will continue until racists like Jon Justice and the right-wing radio stations that reward him are driven out of business. The campaign will be raised at the Tucson Stop War On Iran action Aug. 2nd where it will be linked as part of the war at home to the war abroad.

More information on the Stop Hate Radio campaign is available online at derechoshumanosaz.net. □





# Hands off Iran!

*Continued from page 1*  
and the oppressed in the U.S.?

The U.S. is the wealthiest, most militarized imperialist state. The Pentagon's role is to impose U.S. diplomatic and economic policy on the world, to control raw materials, to police worldwide ocean trading lanes, and to impose the power of the U.S.-based multinational corporations to super-exploit workers worldwide, including workers inside the U.S. Washington is the home office of world repression and exploitation. Israel is its branch office.

The Iranian state is the result of a popular revolution in 1979 that overthrew the shah, a monarchic dictator. A CIA-directed conspiracy had re-installed this shah in 1953, deposing an elected government. The shah, armed and backed by U.S. imperialism, had his military and police murder tens of thousands of people in his failed attempt to stop the 1979 revolution. This revolution stopped short of overturning capitalist social relations in Iran, but it broke the grip of the imperialist corporations and opened the door to social development in Iran.

There is no doubt a sovereign and independent Iran has the right to trade with whatever countries it chooses, to explore possible energy supplies, including nuclear energy, and even to prepare for self-defense with nuclear weapons. The U.S. possesses almost limitless nuclear weapons and Israel is suspected of possessing 200; these states are both declared enemies of Iran. Nearby India and Pakistan also possess at least some of these weapons, without U.S. hostility.

Washington has just signed a pact helping nuclear-armed India develop its civilian nuclear power, even though the U.S. excuse for threatening Iran is Tehran's program for developing **civilian** nuclear power. Last December, 16 U.S. spy agencies reported that there is no evidence that Iran has a nuclear weapons program. Prevention of nuclear

proliferation is the U.S. cover story. Iran's independence from imperialism, its sovereignty and its oil reserves are the real reasons why Washington has targeted the Islamic Republic.

The next question is—despite Bush's weakened position as the most unpopular president since Richard Nixon in his final days in office, despite Bush's isolation from not only the U.S. population but sectors of the Pentagon brass who fear the stress and strain on their ground troops after the setbacks in Iraq and Afghanistan, despite the potential for a disastrous explosion in the Middle East and the entire Muslim world, despite the possibility of a massive increase in the price of oil, despite all these dangers—will the Bush gang use what it believes is overwhelming U.S. air power to attack Iran, perhaps following an initial strike by Israel?

A look at the history of imperialist adventures in World Wars I and II, up to the assault on Iraq in 2003, shows that it would be foolish to rule out the possibility of a new adventure simply because that aggression might become another enormous setback for U.S. imperialism itself—not to mention a horror for 70 million Iranian people. The Bush gang, the oil monopolies and the military-industrial complex might be all too ready to back such a risky move. We cannot rule out that the deepening, unsolvable economic crisis might drive imperialism to another war.

For U.S. workers of all nationalities facing unemployment, foreclosures and evictions, not only would such a war be a distraction from their necessary struggle for economic justice, it would be an additional disaster, no matter the outcome. They must mobilize to stop this new war. It is the responsibility of the anti-war movement and the entire workers' movement to take this danger seriously and organize the kind of independent struggle that can stop it. □

## MUNDO OBRERO

# CYNTHIA MCKINNEY *para presidenta*

*Continúa de página 12*  
Para que el movimiento de la clase trabajadora crezca política y organizacionalmente, va a tomar tiempo, experiencia en la lucha de clases, y la ayuda de fuerzas políticas conscientes dedicadas a resucitar la lucha.

¿Qué es lo que se necesita de tod@s nosotr@s que nos consideramos entre l@s dedicad@s? Por lo menos es un nivel más alto de claridad, seriedad, confianza, solidaridad y capacidad para forjar coaliciones.

La campaña de McKinney está liderada por negr@s, es antiimperialista, centrada en la clase trabajadora y tiene una base

multinacional y radical con el potencial de crecer sin limites.

Por supuesto, creemos que la lucha no debe restringirse al campo de las elecciones, especialmente cuando la clase dominante domina completamente el proceso electoral. Tenemos que estar en las calles luchando en contra de la guerra, en contra de los desahucios y ejecuciones hipotecarias, luchando en solidaridad con l@s trabajador@s inmigrantes, etc. Sin embargo, el Partido Workers World/ Mundo Obrero considera que apoyar la campaña de McKinney es un paso adelante hacia la vía que debe tomar el movimiento. □

## Workers World in 1980

# U.S. and Iran—the critical stage

*Workers World is in its 50th year of publication. Below are excerpts from this article written by Sam Marcy, chairperson of Workers World Party, from the April 18, 1980, issue of the paper as part of our special archival series. Read the article in its entirety at [www.workers.org](http://www.workers.org).*

By Sam Marcy

April 16—Now that the Carter administration has broken diplomatic relations with the Iranian government and has over a long period carried out a variety of economic, political and diplomatic measures calculated to wreck the Iranian economy, it has finally embarked on the road of bludgeoning its imperialist allies to do likewise.

The purpose is to create a worldwide imperialist front in order to intervene militarily in Iran, overturn the gains of the Iranian Revolution and restore a regime subservient to U.S. imperialism.

The policy of the Carter administration creates the greatest war danger ever in the entire Middle Eastern region. The constant buildup of U.S. Naval and Air Forces in this region has created a virtual firestorm of hatred against U.S. imperialism, but this has not shaken the Carter administration's determination to continue its military confrontation politics in the Middle East. Ever since the pronouncement of the infamous Carter Doctrine, which declares that the Persian Gulf is of vital "national interest" to U.S. imperialism, the regional tensions in the area have become more and more intense.

Over and above all this, the aim of the U.S. is to find a covert avenue for involving and forcing the USSR into a struggle with it. Because of the possibility of an outbreak of a general conflict in the area instigated by the U.S., it is necessary to review the situation in the light of Marxist-Leninist strategy on the question of imperialist war.

### Hostage issue—ploy by U.S.

The U.S. media continues to play up the hostage problem as the principal issue in the dispute between the U.S. and Iran. In reality this is a lie. The hostage issue is really a ploy by the U.S. authorities to divert attention from its basic materialist interests in Iran and in the entire Middle East area.

Precisely because the U.S. government has embarked on a policy of provoking Iran, we have to consider the possibility that if the U.S. commits one or more slightly disguised covert or open military thrusts against Iran the hostages may conceivably be harmed.

In that eventuality, the U.S. media will pull out all stops in a hysterical, chauvinist campaign to raise the war fever in the U.S. to a new pitch. It must therefore be kept very much in mind that the Iranian government has at all times and in every way possible offered to return the hos-

tages immediately if only the U.S. government would meet the just and reasonable demands of the Iranian government.

These have been reduced to: 1) a pledge by the U.S. not to interfere in the internal affairs of Iran and to respect its sovereignty; 2) a pledge not to obstruct the legal process of getting the return of the ex-shah and his Iranian assets which belong to the Iranian people; and 3) agreement to admit the complicity of the U.S. in the crimes of the ex-shah.

Agreeing to these elementary demands will not affect in the slightest degree the economic, political or social interests of the American working class or the mass of the people generally. On the contrary, it would only demonstrate an identity of interest between the Iranian and American working class. This is what has to be remembered. This is what has to be indelibly printed in the memory of all in case the Carter administration finally takes a plunge for which it has been so assiduously preparing.

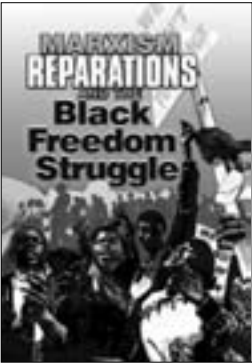
### 'America vs. Iran?'

The struggle between the U.S. and Iran is falsely posed as a struggle between "America" and Iran. This formulation of the issue, which may occasionally be justified for purely journalistic and literary convenience, is politically harmful and sociologically false. The war conducted against Iran is an imperialist war on the part of the U.S. as it is a war of national liberation so far as the Iranian people are concerned.

The war is of an imperialist character, not merely because of the expansionist proclivities of successive U.S. administrations. It is an imperialist war because it is conducted by the monopoly capitalist ruling class of the United States, which owns and controls more than 90 percent of all the wealth in this country and dominates all the vital economic, social and political arteries of life. The majority of the people are thus forced under existing circumstances to follow the line of the ruling class.

The working class and oppressed people in this country are a subject class without any real voice in the present system, which thrives on exploitation and class oppression. In order to fight the growing war danger it is necessary to fight the developing conflict by unmasking first and foremost its class character—that it is a war conducted solely in the interests of the capitalist class, of the ruling monopolies, especially the oil monopolies, and a handful of financial and industrial dynasties. These dynasties conduct themselves like an ancient oligarchy and work hand in glove with the military, whose aim is to promote interventionist adventures abroad.

Conducting the war under the symbol of America versus Iran not only conceals the narrow social grouping on whose behalf the war is really conducted. It also inculcates chauvinism and racism and weakens and debilitates any independent working-class expression against the war. All the more necessary is it to raise the working-class banner in the struggle against the war; raise the level of working-class consciousness in this country as a whole; and promote international class solidarity with the working class and the oppressed in Iran who are struggling against imperialism. □



## MARXISM, REPARATIONS & the Black Freedom Struggle

The following sections present an outline of the contents beginning with the Introduction:

- Black liberation & the working-class struggle
- The material basis for reparations in the U.S.
- Brief overview of racist oppression & heroic resistance
- What Hurricane Katrina exposed to the world
- Africa: A battleground against colonialism and for sovereignty
- Justice for the Caribbean
- A salute to women revolutionaries
- Why fight-back is inevitable
- Black labor and class solidarity

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# The global economic crisis and its impact in East Africa

By **Abayomi Azikiwe**  
Editor, Pan-African News Wire

With the current economic crisis worsening in the United States and Europe, conditions in the former colonial nations have reached critical proportions. In Eastern Africa, mounting food deficits, a sharp decline in living standards and rising energy costs have intensified ongoing political and labor unrest.

In Somalia, where a U.S.-backed invasion in December 2006 has met with continuing resistance, the humanitarian situation inside this Horn of Africa nation has been described by humanitarian organizations as the worst crisis on the continent.

Mark Bowden, who is the United Nations Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator for Somalia, has pointed out that although the situation inside the country is quite similar to what exists throughout the region, the overall conditions are far worse.

“The food and livelihood crisis in Somalia is already critical after very poor rains in the southern and central parts of the country this year, combined with violence and limited or no access to the affected populations,” Bowden said in a press conference in Nairobi, Kenya, on July 23.

At the same press conference, Besida Tonwe, who heads the regional office of the U.N. Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, said that the urban poor were among those at greatest risk.

In specific reference to Somalia, which has not had an internationally recognized government since the collapse of the Western-backed Siad Barre regime in 1991, Tonwe said: “The emergency is exacerbated by the erosion of livelihoods among the landless, pastoralists, internally displaced persons and the urban poor across the regions. Disease outbreaks fuelled by poor hygiene and sanitation in drought-affected areas, and poor health and nutrition services, including low immunization coverage, are additional risks for mothers and children.”

In Ethiopia, where the country’s military is occupying Somalia on behalf of U.S. foreign policy imperatives, Peter Smerdon, a senior public affairs officer for the UN World Food Program, emphasized at the above-mentioned press conference, that some 4.6 million people will be in need of emergency food aid between August and the end of 2008. This food shortage is the result of the drought and political unrest in the southern, central, western and northeastern areas of the country.

That shows the pro-Western stance of Prime Minister Meles Zenawi of Ethiopia has not provided any tangible benefits to the masses of people living in both urban and rural areas inside the country.

## Resistance to occupation continues in Somalia

Somalia’s people have resisted the Ethiopian military occupation, which is supplied with sophisticated weapons from the Pentagon. By bombing civilian areas, destroying the national infrastructure including the airport in the capital, as well as displacing hundreds of thousands of people, the occupiers have eliminated any progress made by the Union of Islamic Courts during 2006.

On July 24-25 Islamic anti-occupation resistance forces attacked Ethiopian soldiers in the town of Beledweyne, located 210 miles north of the capital of Mogadishu. Ethiopian units responded by seizing a bridge in the center of Beledweyne, which

was later recaptured by the Somali resistance in a round of heavy artillery shelling in this major battle.

Ethiopia has continued to support and prop up the Somali Transitional Federal Government, which the Somali masses view as a front for Western interests in the region and which they therefore fiercely oppose.

Earlier in May, rebellions erupted in the capital of Mogadishu in response to rising prices for food and other essential services. The U.S.-backed transitional government had just issued a new currency, which turned out to be worthless in conducting transactions in the marketplace.

Just recently the United Nations World Food Program issued a warning that a million people could go hungry in Somalia by August unless there are major shipments of food to address the growing shortages. It has been estimated that since the Ethiopian military invaded the country in December 2006, some 8,000 civilians have been killed and approximately 1 million others have been internally displaced.

## New developments in Kenya’s labor struggles

In Kenya several months after more than 1,000 people died in violent clashes sparked by the dispute over the outcome of national elections last December, the ability of the present coalition government, composed of two pro-U.S. parties headed by Mwai Kibaki and Raila Odinga, has been severely compromised.

A July 24 Inter-Regional Information Network report stated, “Erratic rainfall, soaring farming costs, and a shortage in materials in the western district of Mount Elgon could compromise food security in the region.”

The IRIN report quoted a farmer in western Kenya, Wilson Keya of the Cheptais division of the district of Mt. Elgon, who said: “Right now we are expecting four bags of maize per acre instead of the usual 20 as we could not afford to use any fertilizer.” Prices for fertilizer have doubled over the last year, decreasing sales in the district up to 60 percent.

Meanwhile, dockworkers employed by the Kenya Ports Authority are resisting rising costs and declining living standards. The Dock Workers Union has engaged in a work slowdown which began as a protest against a seven-day work schedule that the KPA imposed. The new rules deny overtime pay for Saturday and Sunday.

According to the controversial schedule, implemented on July 1, employees must work seven straight days before they can have two days off. The new schedule limits overtime hours, causing a steep decline in workers’ incomes amid a rapid rise in the cost of food, fuel and other services.

On July 27 the union’s secretary-general, Simon Sang, stated that the labor actions would continue until Aug. 1. When talks failed to resolve differences with the KPA, the union threatened a full-blown strike in this industry vital to Kenya’s economy.

KPA Managing Director Abdalla Mwaruwa said on July 23 that the work slowdown was illegal and that the Dock Workers’ demand for the withdrawal of the seven-day work schedule was “impossible because it came about as a result of a court award.” The KPA representative said that the labor action carried out by the 4,000 Dock Workers could paralyze operations at the port. The KPA threat-

ens to fire workers taking part in the slowdown.

## Regional crisis highlights failure of neo-liberal agenda

Even though the United States, Britain and the European Union are demanding that African nations in the eastern region of the continent follow their purported “anti-terrorism” and pro-capitalist agenda, the conditions for the masses of working people and farmers are worsening. During the recent G8 summit in Japan, the major preoccupation of these imperialist states was the total isolation of Zimbabwe and the deployment of more military forces to the Darfur region of Sudan.

When the eight African heads of state invited to the G8 meeting reminded the industrialized countries that they had promised to provide \$40 billion some three years ago at the summit in Scotland to assist in industrial, agricultural and health care projects, their questions were dismissed while the imperialists continued to insist on setting the agenda for these developing regions.

Yet it is quite obvious that the legacy of colonialism and neo-colonialism in Africa

cannot be overcome within the context of the present system. Washington and its allies staunchly oppose every attempt the Africans make to exercise some semblance of independence as it relates to economic and political policies. In Somalia this intervention has taken the form of an indirect U.S. occupation, leading to the worst humanitarian crisis on the African continent.

In Kenya the problems of rising costs and food deficits are increasing political and labor unrest in critical areas of the national economy. In Ethiopia, despite the large-scale military and political assistance provided by Washington, the majority of the people are becoming poorer every day.

As the situation unfolds inside the United States as well, the massive drain of the military and security apparatus has had a profound impact on the living standards of the working class and the oppressed. These conditions both inside the Western imperialist states and in the regions of the so-called Third World provide greater avenues for potential international solidarity among the peoples of the globe.

*Go to [panafricannews.blogspot.com](http://panafricannews.blogspot.com).*

# Indian gov’t nearly toppled over nuclear deal with U.S.

By **David Hoskins**

India’s government barely survived a confidence vote in Parliament on July 22 after the ruling coalition was thrown into turmoil over opposition to its planned nuclear deal with the United States. The close vote of 275 to 256 followed two days of bitter debate, strikes and demonstrations.

The atmosphere was so hectic that Prime Minister Manmohan Singh was unable to finish his closing speech. Some lawmakers from opposition parties said they had been offered bribes of as much as \$750,000 each if they would abstain from the confidence vote. Eleven members of parliament did abstain.

India and the United States had issued a joint declaration in the summer of 2005 promising close cooperation on India’s civilian nuclear program.

The Indian National Congress is the largest party in the ruling United Progressive Alliance (UPA) and the most vocal supporter of civilian nuclear cooperation with the United States. Congress has argued that the deal is important to India’s economic growth and energy independence.

## Leftist parties decry nuclear deal

India’s many large leftist parties, however, have almost all unanimously decried the measure as a ceding of India’s sovereignty to U.S. imperialism. Most of the left-leaning parties are very critical of a clause in the agreement that forces India to verifiably separate its civilian and nuclear military programs and to place its civilian nuclear facilities under the International Atomic Energy Agency’s safeguards in exchange for full civil nuclear energy cooperation and trade with the U.S. Some of the leftist parties have also articulated environmental concerns regarding the development of a nuclear energy program.

The Socialist Unity Centre of India (SUCI), one of the main non-parliamentary communist parties that have criticized

the deal, recently stated, “After the dismantling of the socialist camp, the Indian bourgeoisie made no secret of its desperation to develop closeness with U.S. imperialism, even by offering a plethora of concessions and concurring, overtly or covertly, with many of its nefarious moves.”

The Communist Party of India and the Communist Party of India–Marxist both withdrew their parliamentary support from the UPA government in protest of the nuclear deal. The Revolutionary Socialist Party and Forward Bloc announced they were withdrawing their support as well. The four parties have 59 seats between them.

The Communist Party of India–Maoist called a one-day strike in opposition to the nuclear deal. The strike was observed in parts of Jharkhand, Orissa, Bengal and Bihar states. The CPI-Maoist was formed in 2004 by the merger of several parties that for the past 40 years have been leading an armed struggle to overthrow the bourgeois Indian state.

SUCI organized a mass protest march in Kolkata. SUCI activist Amitava Chatterjee stated during the rally, “We consider this deal absolutely anti-people and pro-imperialist. It has been signed or is going to be signed in the interest of the corporate houses, corporate finance of both USA and India. We strongly believe that this agreement has nothing to do with nuclear power as such for electrification or something like that. It is purely a military pact aimed at consolidating the relationship between America, the greatest superpower, with India the junior partner who aspires to be the next superpower in Asia.”

While UPA’s survival of the confidence vote makes it likely that the joint nuclear deal will move forward for now, the Congress Party and its allies may face strong competition in the upcoming elections from its former leftist allies at the same time that the non-parliamentary parties intensify mass actions against the deal. □



# M★NDO OBRERO

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## Alto a la Coca Cola asesina

# El Tribunal de los Pueblos prepara veredicto en Colombia

Por LeiLani Dowell  
Bogotá, Colombia

21 de julio — Activistas estadounidenses, participantes en una delegación organizada por el Intercambio de Sindicalistas EEUU/Cuba, se unieron a otros 1.700 participantes aquí hoy, para el comienzo del Tribunal Permanente de los Pueblos-sesión Colombia.

Esta tercera y última sesión del tribunal, que se reúne desde el 21 al 23 de julio, está investigando el rol de las corporaciones multinacionales, con la asistencia y el apoyo del gobierno colombiano y las organizaciones paramilitares, en la extrema represión de los movimientos sociales colombianos, incluyendo sindicatos, estudiantes, indígenas, y campesin@s.

Participantes de varias partes del mundo oirán testimonios de sobrevivientes, abogad@s e investigador@s durante los próximos tres días.

Adolfo Pérez Esquivel, argentino y

ganador del Premio Nobel de la Paz en 1980, está presidiendo el panel de jueces que va a examinar la evidencia presentada al tribunal.

Audiencias previas han examinado cómo la industria agropecuaria extranjera ha afectado a l@s campesin@s y a los pueblos indígenas; el rol de las compañías mineras y de petróleo; el impacto del desarrollo transnacional controlado por las corporaciones sobre la biodiversidad y el medioambiente; y las compañías de petróleo y las violaciones de los derechos humanos.

Además de la represión — incluyendo masacres, secuestros, desapariciones y amenazas de muerte — otros abusos infligidos al pueblo colombiano han sido anotados, tales como la eliminación total de varias comunidades indígenas, la destrucción de la biodiversidad del país, y el control de los precios por medio de la especulación.

Hoy fue presentado un testimonio

por Sinaltrainal, el Sindicato Nacional de Trabajador@s de la Industria de Alimentos, sobre la persecución de sindicalistas por las corporaciones Coca Cola y Nestlé. Otr@s orador@s representaron a la Federación de Mineros del Sur de Bolívar, a la Unión Nacional de Trabajadores del Servicio Público, a la Organización Nacional Indígena de Colombia y al Colectivo de Abogados “José Alvear Restrepo”, entre otros grupos.

El 22 de julio, l@s participantes en el tribunal asistirán a una manifestación y luego oirán presentaciones de representantes de Bolivia, Venezuela y Ecuador — mostrando que el fenómeno de explotación por corporaciones multinacionales se extiende por toda América Latina.

En una muestra de solidaridad con el tribunal, acciones simultáneas tendrán lugar el mismo día por todo los Estados Unidos. Amy Vélez, una organizadora de Comuner@s, una organización comunitaria de colombian@s que viven en los

Estados Unidos dice que este grupo está trabajando por toda la Ciudad de Nueva York para organizar un evento el 22 de julio.

Vélez dijo al Centro de Acción Internacional, “Por lo menos por algunas horas el martes vamos a mostrar nuestra solidaridad con nuestr@s hermanos y hermanas en Colombia. Tendremos una asamblea frente a las oficinas de Coca Cola por el bien documentado rol que está desempeñando la Coca Cola con los paramilitares en Colombia. Estos escuadrones de muerte no matan solamente a nuestr@s hermanos y hermanas sino que trabajan con la Coca Cola para destruir los sindicatos.”

La delegación de activistas estadounidenses se quedará varios días en Colombia después del 23 de julio para entrevistar trabajador@s y miembr@s de varios movimientos sociales con el propósito de regresar a los Estados Unidos para ayudar a construir un movimiento de solidaridad con Colombia. □

## El porqué Workers World/Mundo Obrero está endosando a CYNTHIA MCKINNEY para presidenta

El periódico Workers World/Mundo Obrero en el pasado ha apoyado a candidat@s para la presidencia de los Estados Unidos de nuestro propio partido, Workers World/Mundo Obrero quienes han presentado un programa socialista revolucionario. Esta vez estamos tomando un paso diferente dando nuestro apoyo a la candidatura de Cynthia McKinney porque estos son tiempos únicos y ella es una candidata única.

McKinney, una valiente mujer negra y ex congresista de Estados Unidos por el estado de Georgia, se ha convertido en una de las más militantes líderes y voces para la izquierda de los Estados Unidos, los movimientos negros y progresistas.

Por su militancia en las luchas en contra de la guerra, para destituir a Bush, y para exponer al papel jugado por el gobierno en la expulsión de l@s sobrevivientes del huracán Katrina, a ella se le marcó como “muy negra” y muy radical para las salas del Congreso. El liderazgo del Partido Demócrata la obligó a retirarse del Congreso no sólo una vez, sino en dos ocasiones. El año pasado, McKinney cortó sus lazos con ese partido.

El 12 de julio, McKinney y su compañera de campaña, Rosa Clemente, obtuvieron la nominación del Partido Verde para la presidencia y vice presidencia respectivamente. La nominación del Partido Verde pondrá a McKinney en las papeletas en 20 estados, lo cual no es insignificante en los Estados Unidos, donde la clase gobernante ha hecho muy difícil para las formaciones electorales independientes y las que se inclinan un poco a la izquierda de sus dos partidos, que entren formalmente en la carrera presidencial. Nuestra razón para apoyar a McKinney no es por el Partido Verde.

La campaña de McKinney, “Poder para el Pueblo”, tiene gran parte de su programa del programa todavía en formación del Partido de Reconstrucción. Activistas de Nueva Orleans y del Golfo, junto a partidari@s por toda la nación, han estado formando el Partido de Reconstrucción como un vehículo político para luchar por la reconstrucción del Golfo y por la justicia para l@s sobrevivientes de Katrina.

El programa del Partido de Reconstrucción está inspirado en el programa del Partido Panteras Negras. El programa del Partido de Reconstrucción demanda entre otras cosas: autodeterminación para el pueblo negro, la relocalización al Golfo de los sobrevivientes desplazad@s por Katrina, empleos, cuidado de salud y viviendas, reparación para el pueblo negro, fin al terror racista y la represión política, fin al complejo prisión-industrial y el fin a la guerra.

La campaña de McKinney está sentando las bases para una coalición radical de activistas negr@s, latin@s, asiatic@s e indígenas, sindicalistas, progresistas y revolucionari@s. Esto es importante y oportuno.

No nos hacemos de ilusiones sobre las dificultades que enfrentará la campaña de McKinney, porque estas elecciones presidenciales no son como las otras anteriores.

### La crisis económica y las posibilidades para la lucha de clase

Barack Obama es la primera persona de raza negra en ser nominada por un partido de la clase gobernante y podría llegar a ser el primer presidente negro en los Estados Unidos. Much@s, comprensiblemente, se sienten alentad@s por la candidatura de Obama, especialmente la gente de raza negra.

No importa cuánto Obama se mueva a la derecha, es muy probable que en noviembre la gente negra vote en cantidad sin precedentes con la esperanza de alcanzar algo que muy poca gente consideraba posible hace un año. Fuera de l@s votantes negr@s, much@s votarán a favor de Obama por razones que históricamente son progresistas. Y algun@s no votarán por Obama por su nombre, pensando que es musulmán y porque es negro.

La raza, o lo que algun@s de nosotr@s llamamos la cuestión nacional, es central a las elecciones de este año.

Pero hay un lado negativo a esta situación contradictoria. Si Obama gana las elecciones (una posibilidad que no debe considerarse segura), la clase dominante imperialista de los EEUU tendría a un talentoso



político negro que les va a ayudar a rescatar a su perturbado imperio. Una presidencia de Obama proporcionando la faz del estado imperialista no cambiará nada fundamental, pero en la superficie marcará un cambio, una nueva situación.

La clase capitalista de los EEUU necesita desesperadamente tratar algo nuevo para ayudarles con sus superpuestas crisis de desorden económico y guerras imperialistas. En los despachos ejecutivos de Wall Street, algunos están sin duda, esperando a que alguien como Obama pueda postergar o desviar una rebelión en contra de las condiciones sociales amplias a nivel de depresión económica, o por lo menos jugar el papel de chivo expiatorio para las condiciones de miseria que la clase dominante está preparando para l@s trabajador@s.

El fenómeno de Obama es más que nada una señal de que el período de reacción política, que ha restringido a la clase trabajadora y ha debilitado a los movimientos revolucionarios, sus organizaciones y las ideas revolucionarias, está llegando a su fin.

No importa quién gane las elecciones, la magnitud de la crisis en espiral del imperialismo mundial, centrada aquí en los EEUU, va a desafiar a las fuerzas que comparten una orientación antiimperialista, socialista y orientada hacia la clase trabajadora, a apartarse de las perspectivas estrechas, los hábitos sectarios y las pequeñas diferencias que han penetrado durante el período largo y desmoralizador de reacción mundial.

Las condiciones materiales para un resurgimiento de la clase trabajadora pueden, más pronto que tarde, alcanzar niveles no vistos en este país desde los años 1930.

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